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SWARTHOUT PLEASED
WITH SPRING FOOTBALL

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MISSOULA---

Spring football practice is over at the University of Montana and coach Jack Swarthout is pleased with the way it went.

Swarthout said, Monday, "Our defense came along better than we anticipated and the offense did as we expected it to." Montana had 12 starters returning for spring drills and the bulk of them were on the offensive unit.

Graduations took the heaviest toll in the defensive line and linebacking corps. Montana lost two-time All-American Larry Miller and All-Big Sky Larry Stranahan at the tackles and Jim Nordstrom, a All-Big Sky player, at defensive end. The only lineman returning on that unit was Greg Maloney.

Swarthout reached into the Washington junior college circuit and recruited All-American first teamer, Leo LaRoche from Columbia Basin at a defensive end slot and got tackle Gary Swearingen from Grays Harbor. Jim Leid, a 1970 redshirt, took over as the other defensive tackle.

Swarthout had to depend on the freshman and veteran ranks for his linebackers. Bill Sterns was the only starter returning to spring drills as Montana lost All-Big Sky (1969) outside linebacker Tim Gallagher to the Dallas Cowboys via graduation and John Waxham, also a graduating senior.

In the middle, Swarthout depended exclusively on freshmen. Dennis Doyle, Jerry Cooley and Doug Nakoa battled it out for Waxham's spot while veterans Terry Pugh, Bruce Spencer and Tony Bozzo along with freshman Curt Donner fought for Gallagher's position.

The Montana defensive secondary wasted little time in getting organized. The Grizzlies return veterans and starters mostly there. Mick Dennehy, Bob Guptill, Dean Dempsey Robin Peters and Lonzie Jackson are starters and seasoned veterans. They were pushed by newcomers Terry Reynolds, Rob Stark and Rick Dodds.

(more)

Turning to the offense, Swarthout was elated with the offensive line. "We have a lot of veterans returning there and I was impressed with their attitude. They went out and hit like they were trying to break into the lineup," Swarthout said.

Starters Willie Postler, Barry Darrow, Steve Okoniewski and Ray Stachnik returned along with veterans Ron Richards and John Lugviel.

The backfield lost UM all-time rushing leader Arnie Blancas and All-American fullback Les Kent, but had a host of fine backs to replace them.

One of the biggest surprises was the return of Jeff Hoffmann after a year's layoff. Hoffmann led all rushers in the three spring games with 233-yards. Hoffmann took over for Wally Gaskins on the Maroon unit early in the spring when Gaskins ruptured an Achielles tendon. The other fullback Gary Findley, a Great Falls walkon, performed well also gaining 130-yards.

Freshman halfback Jim Olson dazzled the Kalispell fans with his rushing and scoring spree, Olson tallied three times including a 80-yard TD gallop. In that game he rushed for 108-yards. He did not play the second half of the Great Falls game or all of the Missoula clash.

Veterans Steve Caputo, Casey Reilly, Sparky Kottke and Jim Schillinger had fine spring games from the halfback slots. Reilly, Caputo and Kottke gained over 100-yards for the three contests.

At quarterback, Gary Berding looked impressive rushing for 231-yards and throwing for 177 more. He found a partner in 6-4 tight end Tom Bodwell who grabbed 14 passes for 208-yards and a touchdown through the spring.

Freshman Jay Baumburger was the spring's top passer hitting 16 of 31 for 221-yards for a 51 per cent average. Kevin Flagler also had a good spring until a wrist injury curtailed his spring training.

Swarthout also got a pleasant surprise in the kicking department. Dan Worrell graduated and freshman Bob Turnquist proved just as potent. He hit five of five field goals including a 47-yarder and was Montana's leading scorer with 25 points.

"In all, we're (UM staff) pleased with the attitude and development of our team for the spring session. If we keep this attitude, develop and have some luck we'll have a good football team next fall," he concluded.

Montana opens its 1971 schedule in Great Falls on Sept. 4 against South Dakota.